

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The majority of foreign students who earned S&E doctorates from U.S. institutions during 1988–96 planned to locate in the United States, and almost 40 percent reported firm plans for further study or employment. Most of those with firm plans had offers of postdoctoral appointments. The remaining students (17 percent of all foreign S&E doctoral students) had employment offers, mostly from industry. The primary work activity identified in these offers from industry is research and development. Industry was more likely to make offers to new foreign Ph.D.s who majored in engineering, the physical sciences, and computer science than to those who majored in other fields.

Stay rates for foreign students are not static. They are influenced by U.S. immigration policy, the number and quality of job opportunities in the home countries of the students, and political change. The stay rate of foreign doctoral recipients should be closely monitored because it has implications for the U.S. economy and the

concentration of scientists and engineers in the United States as well as on the economies of the nations these students come from. For example, in the 1990s, the number of South Korean and Taiwanese S&E doctoral recipients reporting plans to remain in the United States declined because the economies of South Korea and Taiwan increased those countries' capacities to absorb the majority of the U.S.-trained doctoral scientists and engineers. Whether this trend continues following the Asian economic crisis of 1998 should be monitored. Because China is now the main country of origin of foreign S&E doctoral recipients in the United States, the trend toward increasing stay rates in the 1990s should be followed to see whether it is temporary. Should China succeed in implementing economic reforms that rely heavily on scientific and technological progress, the demand for high-level specialized personnel and the number of new Ph.D.s returning to China may increase substantially.